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Two notable documents of General Castro,



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TWO

NOTABLE PUBLIC

DOCUMENTS

OF

GENERAL CASTRO

PRESIDENT OF VENEZUELA

NEW YORK

1904

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A. 206061

To the

Hon. Herbert M. Bowen.

IN presenting to you the translation of two of the most notable public documents, produced by our patriot President, I beg to acknowledge the integrity and honesty of your character, when in the attack of "three Powers" against Venezuela, led you to stand by the side of the righteousness, and won for the cause of "Justice," the most enviable laurel in your diplomatical career.

Please accept my warm admiration and sincere esteem.

Respectfully,

Pedro Rafael Rincónes,

Consul General of Venezuela.



GENERAL CIPRIANO CASTRO,
Constitutional President of Venezuela.

"Let us have faith that right makes might;
and in that faith let us dare to do our duty."

LINCOLN.

A D D R E S S
OF
GENERAL CIPRIANO CASTRO
CONSTITUTIONAL PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC
TO THE VENEZUELAN S
ON JULY FIFTH, NINETEEN HUNDRED AND THREE

LET us stop and wonder while delivering this patriotic oration on the anniversary of this memorable and solemn day, the birthday of our Venezuelan home, independent and free.

Seen from this distance of time, at a period when austere and forceful civil virtue is so rarely met with, the men who inaugurated and directed the revolutionary movement of 1811 appear indeed of more than ordinary estate.

In contemplating and studying them and their work after this lapse of years, they appear to grow and increase in size and assume clearer outlines, not unlike the projections of the mountains at twilight and as the light of the new day that rises above the line of the horizon.

They all were endowed with the qualities called for by the exigencies of their times.

The ideas of liberty that at this period impregnated the minds of the people, like the generating pollen on wings of revolutions to fructify this globe, germinated in the souls of these men like the seed sown in deep and wide furrows. Creative and resourceful men, who, notwithstanding the adverse surroundings and the reigning prejudices, gallantly entered the arena to battle for freedom, and at once astonished the world by their olympic audacity.

Like God to the ocean, they dared to say to the ever proud, overbearing and incroaching tide of medieval invasion: "Here shall be stayed their proud billows." And stayed they were, because these men built the levees against which the tendencies of historical absolutism vainly dashed their forces. They formed among the people alliances based upon liberty, and in order to make

them strong against all contingencies they cemented them with immense sacrifices in blood and treasure, coupled with the highest efforts of body and mind.

Oh, yes, that work of founding a nation must have been, in most respects, strong and enduring, when in spite of attack from within and without for three quarters of a century, it subsists at this day, although weak and feverish from excessive loss of blood, still always strong in spirit, with noble instincts, generous sentiments, and entirely in accord with its history and destiny.

We have erred so much, so much, that at times the reflective mind is almost persuaded to believe that we might be a people fatally condemned to the most painful experiences and trials on the road to civilization, for even in the very school of our own misfortunes, we learn so very, very slowly the ways of practical and normal living — that is to say, the ideas of orderly, peaceful development under the auspices of liberty.

Our society delivered from the foreign yoke, but irredeemed from its own vices, falls and rises by turns, as if it obstinately refused to change in the least its own character and habits, and could not listen to good counsels and sound advice, unless it were clothed in the glare of conflagrations or in the distant rumblings of threatened catastrophes. But, perhaps, may not the deep impressions created by the recent happenings be sufficient to correct these, the most potent causes of the convulsive instability of its institutions and its governments? Will it at last learn the object lesson, so full of unforeseen disaster, the fruits of pickle quackery, supported by the most unbridled passions? May it please God, that so it be!

This is the day, above all others, on which to make solemn vows to the sacred memory of the noble founders of our Nationality. Let us make at least one, but let it be fervent, sincere and irrevocable.

Let us all promise without partisanship, without mental reservation of any kind of intolerance and hatred, to live from this day, possessed with the constantly growing purpose before us, to mend our ways, or what amounts to the same thing, never again to disembowel our country with words and bayonets, but rather to protect it with our bodies, defend it with our arms, and to make it great and happy by our efforts in the field of labor, which latter is the highest form of patriotism. Now to-day is the time, to-morrow it may be too late!

To again expose ourselves to a crisis such as we have just passed through, would be almost equal to abandon our glorious

banner and that grand patrimony bequeathed to us by Miranda the Martyr, Bolivar the Great, and their noble co-workers in the struggle for our redemption.

Let us proclaim from every rostrum, and continue to send to our people in the furthestmost ends of the Republic, words of cheer and encouragement, that they may arise from the terrible trials and sufferings to which they have so long been subjected.

Let us resolve once and a thousand times before the sacred altar of our common country, that we will abandon for once and all the path of error, not as conquered, but as convinced, in order to pursue, without flinching, the road that is pointed out to us by honor and duty, and let us, at last, bury forever those passions that lead to and end only in anarchy.

Thus shall we become strong and respected and be enabled to give force to the outcome of that peace, which to attain has cost us so much, and thus being freed from internal obstacles and danger, we shall be able to direct all our efforts to the end of making of this country the respected and loved home of a worthy, industrious and intelligent people, that for its sturdy virtues will recommend itself to the admiration of the world, and whose moral worth will make up for the deficiencies of its material resources. Venezuela is in evidence before itself and before the world. It is observed and watched in these days of expansion and conquests. The fertility of our soil, the abundance of our natural resources, form incentives for the avaricious tendencies of other nations.

Venezuelans : — The truth must be told, though it may hurt and pain, or rather in order that it causes intense pain, like strong caustic, and thereby brings forth healthful results.

Venezuelans are unfortunately those whom we must charge as being the authors of all our misfortunes, and Venezuelans must be those who shall raise above all the symbol of our national salvation, from our errors and misdeeds.

Under the palladium of this solemn pilgrimage, I, with all her sons, will go to our beloved country, knowing that it, like a loving mother, will forgive even those of her children who have not known how to love and defend her in the days of tribulation. To-day it is just one year since I, with expressions of the most intense patriotism, declared myself as being in the field to stamp out anarchism and to restore constitutional order, and here I am, returned and bringing you that which then I could but promise. There can still be heard the echo of the words with which a year ago I greeted the

dawn of this glorious day, and announced to the country that the requirements of solemn duty and political necessity had again forced the sword into my hands, and had called me with irresistible force to the field of battle, demanding a striking demonstration of the fact that the right is powerful and always will prevail, when it has for standard bearers, men in whom honor is combined with force of character and is backed by strong convictions.

And what I then promised is now fulfilled and completed with evident exactness.

Thus it was that, in a short campaign, success was chained to our chariot of victory in the very hotbed of rebellion, and thus I was enabled, through the heroism of my men and the constancy of fortune, to draw from the very heat of battle the peace necessary for our national existence, the guarantees for our citizenship, to give stability to progress, prestige to our institutions, and thus purified in the crucible of sacrifice and suffering, bring forth those elements that are needed for the political and social restoration of Venezuela.

The impetuous avalanche of human beings and of events was, in hundred days of battling, reduced to an informal mass, stricken with fear and scattered in all directions. The grave foreign complications that overtook us at the time of our internal conflict could not have been foreseen on the day when we marched to battle, but the general results, properly viewed and appreciated; have really exceeded the promises then made, notwithstanding that they were then looked upon as the blatant vaporings of a beaten blusterer, who had bent his footsteps toward inevitable disaster.

These prodigious achievements have not made me vainglorious, nor has the height to which I have been raised by the heroic deeds of the constitutional army in the internal conflict, and the prudence and patriotism of our people in the foreign contest, caused any dizziness to my head. I aspire rather to base my pride upon the good use we may make of these victories, in the work of wise administration, and of the progress in the unification and elevation of our people, and in the battles that we shall have to fight in the field of labor, of civilizations, of the sciences and of the arts. We have for these undertakings the stimulant and first necessity of life, which is that Peace, that will be very shortly officially declared. This peace is not merely the trace following a cruel, bloody struggle, but the definite and logical outcome of a long war; the end of which will also, grant God, terminate our public calamities and open wide to us the horizon of our national aspirations. This peace is the conscien-

tious desire of all, and, therefore, it should be lasting and fruitful, permitting us to realize unflinchingly the programme of the cause of Liberal restoration.

Fellow Patriots : — Let us, on this glorious day, remember with gratitude those who, although not of our kindred, have addressed to us during our dreadful afflictions, words of cheer, and given us tokens of affection and sympathy, and let us swear by the blood so freely shed to seal the Independence of Colombia on that memorable field, which, as a wonder of the national art, serves us at the same time as canopy and horizon during this act.*

Let us swear to prove ourselves worthy of that glorious sacrifice by constantly practicing those virtues which it served to improve.

(Signed) CIPRIANO CASTRO.

CARACAS, July 5th, 1903.

*He refers to very good pictures of the war of independence that are on the inner ceiling of the Capitol, representing the great battles of Carabobo, Boyacá, Junin and Ayacucho, that were the ends of war with Spain, sealing the independence of the Great Colombia, which comprised Venezuela, Nueva Granada and Ecuador. Also of Perú and Bolivia.

ADDRESS
OF
GENERAL CIPRIANO CASTRO
CONSTITUTIONAL PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC
TO THE VENEZUELAN
ON JANUARY FIRST, NINETEEN HUNDRED AND FOUR

FELLOW CITIZENS : — My vows of to-day for your happiness are so fervent that I may hardly succeed in formulating them : My heart is full in this moment only with them, and they could scarcely be translated but in a salutation or prayer to the Deity, who protects the great peoples — the peoples that regenerate and save themselves by sacrifices and self-denial.

Receive and accept these vows as an homage to your nobility, as an innermost offering to the majesty of the Republic, as a testimony of profound gratitude for the immense amount of honors I owe to your confidence.

Fellow Citizens : — The year that begins to-day will be one of the most fruitful and transcendental in the civil history of Venezuelans — it will be as the first triumphal arch of our organized and flourishing democracy.

From the night of grief and trial that has just passed away, the national soul comes forth, radiant and full of experience as an ineffable Eucharist of patriotism. Those dreadful and protracted hours, fatally necessary, perhaps to the chief design of our civilization, will remain marked out with red rings in our republican calendar as a warning in all times to the governments and the parties that there is nothing so disgraceful and so ravenous as the headlong fratricidal rancour, and that in the struggles supported by this rancour, the people gamble or endanger not only their well-being and credit, but even their existence, which for us was the price of great efforts and sublime immolations.

Something intangible, but noble and wise, as the Deity that inflamed the soul of Bolivar, whispers in my ear that we have doubled, perhaps forever, the hateful cape of the domestic tempests. And in fact, it seems impossible, rationally impossible, that a nation, illustrious for its element of blood, renowned for its heroism, great for its virtues and envied for its riches, may relapse still in its turbulent madness of three quarters of a century — madness of tumultuous crowds and mutiny, that in Athens and Rome, as here and everywhere, has never given but fruits of catastrophe — dreadful germination of the greatest misfortunes.

The visible signs of the present situation, valued from a serene and ample point of view, agree together in proving that the country, reacting upon itself with wise and prudent concurrence of opinion, adopts lastly the means of securing a positive liberty, derived from order and tolerance and the desired well-being, by virtue of the fecundation of peace by labor.

It is evident to me, considering the present state of the public opinion, that the peace conquered in four years of bloody fight is not now a truce that the interests in conflict give to each other, but a compact of everlasting alliance between all the great factors of the national democracy, to liquidate at once before History the mournful accounts of common blunders and mistakes, and to open others with the future, in a great book of gradual and intelligent civilization, able to be practically adapted to the native ways and the high ends of social economy.

The factions have not already action of their own, not even peculiar physiognomy. Some subdued, others convinced, all of them are incorporated almost completely with the great restorer Nucleus, to constitute the formidable unit that henceforth will answer before natives and foreigners of the fate of the Republic. That nucleus is the nebulous of a superb condensation of liberal and democratic Venezuela.

Yes, fellow citizens! we are in full exercise of our reflective faculties. We try strenuously to give unity to the public spirit, so that the common patriotic efforts may have the greatest effectiveness, and this is a conclusive proof of practical wisdom, because unity is the first scientific basis of all associations. We renounce to the old factious conventions to belong to the new vigorous communion which, from the borders of the Tachira to that of the Orinoco, has irrigated in immense furrow the beneficent seed of the restorer ideal; and this is a testimony of profound good sense, because men

and parties and even the same ideas, are by an evident historical law more or less accidental elements of a given time, and fall willingly or by force, under the vital principle of incessant transformation that rules in all the spheres of the universe.

Immediate product of this laudable concurrence of the country with its primordiate needs, is the great plebiscite of corporations and citizens that has proclaimed from one end to the other of the national territory, the urgent convenience of the constitutional reforms, to correct certain grave anomalies occasioned by the war, and to adjust the fundamental basis of the Union and the organic principles of the public powers, according to what the same institutions have demonstrated in their application.

The inopportune political idealism of our ruling classes has caused the loss in barren trials of a precious time, that we will only make up bringing to the body of the native institutions elements, of comprobated analogy with our character, and organic rules that may fill up with energetic wisdom our lack of sufficient preparation for the free development of the Republic.

I have been present in the impetuous overflow of the reformist currents as anxious spectator, because the duties of the Magistracy prevent my activity in this field, and I would like to have been able to support it freely with all my vigor. Let this confession be pardoned to me, as pledge of genial republican frankness, confession that wrests from me the vehement desire of seeing consecrated in everlasting Codes and laws the principles that nourished my soul in the exile, that furnished me with arms on the 23rd day of May, 1899, and that afterwards have always been my guide and even my shield in all the peripetias of the *Revolution Liberal Restauradora*, with an efficiency visible to all, because this Revolution has conquered all its adversaries, because under its flag our country has been saved of black conspirators, and because in its provident bosom there is only love for the Venezuelan family.

Let it be also well understood that my agreement with the reformist idea is above all those foul dealings which in similar cases have put in danger the internal security of the State.

There is not a single motive to suppose that I am capable of extravagant ambitions, or that I belong to that class of individuals who affect to surrender to certain insinuations of perfidious conventionalism. Even if I had not come in the high position I occupy by the uprightness of my behavior and the strength of my arms, I would never turn my mind to suggestions unfriendly to liberty.

It is enough the power that the people have given to me, and my character of leader of the most beautiful and certainly the most beneficent revolution that the modern annals of Venezuelan record. With this character and this power, I have tried and will go on trying to obtain for my country the greatest amount of benefit, and when the hour to surrender then comes, there will be no man and no party who will be able to say that I served them or they served me as an instrument for something unworthy of the honor of the Republic.

Venezuelans: — After some days you will be in possession of the propitious, constitutional and judicial elements that you ask with such high reasons as a sovereign and progressive entity. Then and until considerable time after, it is probable that we will have no questions nor political problems that will embarrass or preoccupy us; above all, because when the Association works with guarantees and the Government administrators with honesty and intelligence, there cannot be between the one and the other but sympathetic currents, and this, in my opinion, constitutes a state of things able to satisfy the most pressing aspirations of liberty and expansion — of ample liberation, in short.

Besides, the Liberal Restoration, definitely organized and constituted, will be as a great church, always open to the communion of the modern national spirit by the imminence of the democratic principles in the brilliant eternity of the beloved country. The creed of the citizens in that church will be a permanent protest against the factious pugilism and the reactionary madness, and there will be no Venezuelan that will not swear with noble faith in the altars, eternal love to fraternity and to union.

In this way, free of incandescent passionate political controversies, affirmed the peace in the public conscience, maintained order as a precious necessity to the individual and collective interests, the most fruitful initiative in the sphere of the administration and in the field of business will necessarily come, until our economic level will be raised, and we will have sufficient representation in the markets of the world. This is the *desideratum* of the country in this solemn epoch, undoubtedly because, besides the elemental current reasons that make good its criterion in this particular, its recent history teaches that if some of our good liberal governments would not have withdrawn from the activity of the administration and the improvement of public works to rush into imprudent political adventures, we would have to-day nothing to envy to the most advanced peoples of the Continent.

We are rich and laborious ; two oceans offer us extensive routes to bring and to carry all that we produce and need, and the idle capital in other zones wishes anxiously to come and thrive in our soil. We only want to be sufficiently discreet and judicious to secure confidence — mother of credit — and to exploit our riches with practical and methodical criterion.

If to obtain this you need still some new sacrifice, you can dispose of me and of what I am worth. No greater glory to a man than to have contributed to his country's civilization with all that he received from her and from God, who helps and protects her.

Fellow Citizens : — In the name of the Liberal Restoration and of my loyal forebodings, I augur you that this year will be the first of a series of peaceful lustrums, during which the Republic will raise to great culture and progress.

CARACAS, January 1, 1904.

MESSAGE

OF

GENERAL CIPRIANO CASTRO

PRESIDENT OF VENEZUELA

TO

National Congress

1904

To the

Associated Press:

IT behooves your powerful organization to spread broadcast the news of the rise and fall of the people of the earth.

During the last few years of political interest, Venezuela has seen its soil soaked in blood, its riches wasted and its independence threatened, while its Chief Executive, who has steered the Ship of State clear of the reefs and hidden rocks of internal revolutions and the dangers of foreign complications, has been in more than one instance a victim of the attacks of his enemies' slanders hurled from the press

The last message of the President of Venezuela, General Cipriano Castro, forcibly shows by itself what can be accomplished when an unwavering will power is directed by true patriotism.

Sober-minded and impartial men will know him to value the true worth of the Leader of the "Restoration," and that this will be a fact is an honor to his name and a glory to Venezuela.

Respectfully,

PEDRO RAFAEL RINCÓNES,
Consul General of Venezuela

NEW YORK, May 23, 1904.



GENERAL CIPRIANO CASTRO,
Constitutional President of Venezuela

MESSAGE
OF
GENERAL CIPRIANO CASTRO,
CONSTITUTIONAL PRESIDENT OF VENEZUELA,
TO CONGRESS OF 1904.

Senators and Representatives!

With patriotic effusion I send you my greetings and congratulations and congratulate myself as well on this day of grateful impressions, that is to make an epoch in the annals of our contemporary history.

We leave behind trickles of blood and many tears and ruins, but we have obtained at last what we wished, what in several occasions I have promised to the Republic.

First we have rehabilitated the faith that lay forgotten, owing to the mistakes of the past and to the treasons to their words of some of our public men.

We have founded the public confidence, rooted to-day steadily in the thinking and patriotic majority of the Venezuelans; and that confidence will bring foreign capital and arms, which by means of labor will share with us the exuberance of our natural riches. We shall have a good administration that will develop the great enterprises to which civilization summons us, enterprises to-day paralyzed by causes known to all, the absence of which has been in part a motive of our civil revolts because the administration of our public men has been more for them than for the general convenience, and instead of being slaves to their duties, they have tried to make slaves for their services!

And lastly, we shall have the blessed and longed-for peace, permanent and solid basis upon which we ought to undertake the great work of the liberal restoration that has made so many sacrifices to save itself and save the Republic!

But it is necessary not to be mistaken in order that this work

may succeed and be completed ; it is necessary not to forget that everything is to be done, and that one goes into the restoration not by the ways of the parties that exhaust themselves for the sake of their idols, but by the field of the ideas and of the true political integrity.

It is necessary not to forget that if the restoration, without asking where they come from accepts all who wish spontaneously to serve its cause that a rule of its programme is the purity of the doctrine and the pulchritude of the proceedings.

It is necessary not to forget that the restoration neither supports nor accepts shams that are now cruel for being extremely ridiculous, and that the same seduces and convinces with tangible facts that must last in works, in order that the efficiency of its example in the public conscience may also last.

It is necessary, lastly, to know that the strength of the restoration consists especially in the truth, that is the basis of all justice and all success ; neither punishment for the innocent, nor absolute toleration for the criminal, however much this may be considered a good method to gather proselytes and make politics. Neither premium for the wicked nor contempt for the good servants, as have been doing the founders of systems to perpetuate themselves in power.

The perpetuity of the restoration is to be realized by the excellence of its doctrines and the greatness of its plan, without treacheries, without deceit, without infamies and without false liberation, that is good only to be puffed, not to take roots in the conscience of the people. To falsify the doctrine is to make it loathsome and contemptible. It is by the liberalism, as it has been conceived from Jesus Christ to the present time by all those who have sacrificed themselves for the welfare and progress of mankind, the liberalism as it inspired and founded the Liberal Restoration party in the borders of the river Tachira, when its initiators swore it under a serene and blue sky, and fulgent stars, witnesses of their sincerity and good faith, in the memorable night of May 23rd, 1899.

And it is for this that the Restoration opens its arms to all, and solicits wills, not subdued, but convinced ; and asks, not the convenience but the conscience. And it is for this that the leader of the Restoration proclaims sooner than the pardon that reviles, the

worthy fondness that strengthens the party of his great aspirations. He needs and demands a new sap that invigorates and raises, and not poisoned blood that gangrenes the work that so many sacrifices have cost to the Republic and the loyal servants of the Restoration.

And so it is that the present politics, by virtue of what has happened, has been obliged to be of repression; because the national independence, that should indefectibly be in danger before new strife, ought not to be exposed any longer.

Venezuela, the cradle of the Liberator and of the Revolution that recovered our liberties, is called to superior fates, and it is urgent that we all get ready in consequence to fulfil our duties of patriots, imposing upon ourselves the necessary sacrifices to answer, in the first place to the efforts of our Liberators, then to the solemn obligations that the Liberal Restoration Party has contracted with the country, and finally to look for the internal satisfaction that is always produced in us by the accomplishment of our duties.

Evidently we have found ourselves in such exceptional circumstances that it would not be easy to the historical judgment to ascribe the same importance to the other epochs of our republican existence, so prolific in painful disasters.

Every one of you carries undoubtedly in his conscience, shaken still by the past storm, a painful vibration; every one of you brings, as gathered in the ambient air of the localities, a strange blast that shakes up his spirit with emotions consisting at the same time of grief and of comfort; and thus, by virtue only of this alternative, your souls of patriots ought to have found the true orientation of the providential purposes.

In fact, it is already time, and no opportunity so favorable as this, seriously to meditate as regards to the mysterious progress of occurrences, seemingly conducted by a superior saving tendency towards the merciful solutions of the national rehabilitation.

During this fatidic Olympiad just closed, where was heard above only the clash of a storm broken loose, below something as a profound rumor of catastrophe, and while the thunderbolt fell devastating all, the earth throbbed in convulsions of cataclysm.

All the horizons were black, all the adverse forces unbridled, and all the passions carried away; it was the collapse of the country,

as of a structure badly built which the hurricane whips, it was the breakage of all the ties, the dissolution of all the bonds of union, all the pernicious elements realizing the frightful social devastation.

Many souls did not keep faith in that emergency at any risk predominating of an authority energetically steady and always decorously dressed out by the honor of the person who exercises it; many spirits hesitated, or were overflowed by the muddy waves of the disaster, that had all the phases, all the aspects of great desolations. But, if there were moments in which perhaps only one human eye saw sparkle in the deep darkness the star of redemption, never extinguished for manly citizens, there were also characters that kept themselves trusting in the frightful moral wreck; characters adscript to others who surely God raised to that very great degree of temper that is necessary to confront these formidable conspiracies of fatality, and to whom he gives thanks at this moment, as were rendered to the friendly deities in noisy oblation, by those who many times the Roman faces covered with their majesty, after they had carried to all the world then known, under the sovereign flight of the legionary eagles, the law formulated in the Quirinal hill; as they are given in the shore of deliverance by those who in the stormy solitudes of the sea have proved that they know how to defy death and founder with the flag of justice and their country in their arms.

That character, members of Congress, was not wanting in Venezuela in this critical conjunction of all the dark historical flows of mischief, that, by the enigmatic ways in which the connection of the causes and the effects is realized in the tendency of the races, have come pushing forward, till they have made this great explosion that reverberated in the universe.

That eye which intensely looked upon the star of redemption, that character turned of steel and kept up in the high vision of the ideal, performed undoubtedly a plan devised in the infinite unknown of the Supreme Power who rules the destiny of the peoples and points out to each man his mission and his labor. I have done nothing; I have not deliberately accommodated myself with the circumstances now traded with men. My duty was higher and I have performed it; it was to serve as an immovable dam where the impetuous uproar of barbarism would come to be shat-

tered. I have done my duty because my faith was unconquerable; that faith made me see at this side of the stormy and cloudy sky the fair weather, and made me forebode that that was the vast tragical preface of the spectacle of seriousness and progress that Venezuela is perhaps called to present to the world; that which was the long and agitated estuary that precedes the quiet and safe harbor.

From that faith and from the acts it excited the Republic comes forth pacified, the militarism punished and perhaps dead, the administration directed to new roads; the official judgment inspired in ideas before unknown and realizing proceedings that are the preliminaries of the great work of peace and solid progress in all the spheres of the national life, that the actual Restoration brings in its programme, henceforth more venerable and dearer to our hearts for the baptism of blood and the unction of heroism and grief which it received in this great struggle and from the programme of which it comes forth transfigured and shining.

And now has arrived the work of reconstruction.

If we survey, members of Congress, with a reflective thought the pages of our sorrowful history, we will carry only to the barn of experience a crop of mistaken tears and blood which frightens the most indifferent spirit.

We have dragged along the national dignity through all the disorders of political insanity, we have left on the fields of battle, sacrificed in unfruitful hecatombs, the best of generations, and also the ideal, the hope and the faith; the Republic has been plundered with astonishing ease, with surprising shamefulness, to the extreme of making valid and natural the disgraceful theory that the official callings are not offices of honor and well meaning service to the Republic, but open breaches to the national treasury; that public life is not a field of honor on which to collect laurels and merits to the gratitude of the people, but exchange of usury and speculation where one goes to grab and snatch unappropriated wealth which the most dexterous or the most cynical may apply to himself with plausible freedom * * * The public wealth has been misspent with idiotic perverseness; we have not only stopped the national prosperity, but we have succeeded in moving backward the unhappy country to conditions never seen

before ; ruined cities that were important centers of industrial and commercial activity in times not favorable to freedom and to law ; and we have come even to see sincere, intelligent and thoughtful men speculate upon the strange problem whether we shall have lost instead of gained by independence.

I ask, members of Congress, if this is not very sorrowful, and with my hand in my conscience, I interpeal the upright men that they answer me in the same way if it was not absolutely necessary and urgent to stop the country in that giddy slope that carried it away to the abyss, to the unexpressible shame of total discredit, and perhaps—awful probability—to the horrible retrogression of being a colony. Because the look of the foreigner, the grasping and foreseeing eye of the great Powers that need expansion for their plethoric life, from the efforts of their intelligent and laborious arms ; that permanent look which constantly disturbs the inter-tropical populations considered as half savage by those who believe that civilization and the future are their patrimony ; that look, I say, does not withdraw from us, and there was even an occasion to see very near to the sacred body of the country, the transgressing hand also, although shaking with anger we were disposed to mutilate it.

But politics is not the art of fighting to die gloriously, but the science of foreseeing, of avoiding the catastrophes in the careful study of the evolution of societies. What might we have gained dying heroically in defense of the country as we would have done ? To appear as suicides, because such a tragic conclusion could not be but the fatal results of a whole life, not of childlike rashness, but of stupid improvidence.

There are in history abundant cases of turbulent republics, playthings of exasperated ambitions and unlikely craziness, nationalities lost and gained as by a chance in the gambling dens, in that licentiousness of humanity that filled with darkness and blood the Middle Ages, for instance ; and many optimistic intelligences, well meaning, wishing a remedy to the country, at least in ideal comparisons, that the philosophy of history does not indorse, console themselves in the hope of a spontaneous new birth come forth by the same national forces restored in an orderly manner to a beneficent coherence. Nevertheless the present civilization does not give time for the realization of such spontaneous new births,

which result from a social process that we have not been able to see in our zone.

Those were the times of the fulfillment of the slow and mysterious germination of ideas in the universal conscience; powerful elaboration of radical thoughts, that for the stratifications—if the word is allowed—of the human spirit expanded themselves pushing forward in unknown ascension, as the explosive stuff of a volcano, until they burst with a terrific crashing in the eighteenth century and crowned that summit of history which is called the French Revolution with the eternal crest of fire that the generations shall behold across the ages. But in the present days the influence of ideas is already grown firm; the law formulated in beautiful codes among us theoretically more beautiful still, protects the individual in the societies of age, or vigorously precocious * * * and, notwithstanding, that law is twisted and seeks support in sophisms, with regard to weak nationalities, or above all, to misguided groups, that have not found yet the clear course of their destiny.

And such is our case.

Consequently we want to be on our guard against the threat that sinistrously gleams in the haziness of the gloomy omen; we ought to invigorate ourselves within our frontiers, as anemic organisms, with energetic reconstituents, we ought in conclusion to assume an international personality, that we will not be able to obtain if we do not profoundly modify the routinary proceedings, and do not renew with new materials, strong and useful, the juridical elements of our legislation.

And this is not an intellectual speculation of mine, whimsical or idealistic, that would be strange in such a man as I. On the contrary, I think that our political writers and our ambitious demagogues carried too far, since the cradle of the nation, the revolutionary aspirations to go off substituting with radical laws, jurisprudences qualified with blunder as conservatives, in uncivilized peoples, scions of the Iberian conquest and strange consequently to the public functions in the ample rule of law. We went beyond the discreet limit, and have reached an absolute lack of circumspection in the matter.

These decisive affirmations of mine shall produce surprise in

some, but to those, if they know the politics of this country, and are acquainted with our needs and our laws, I will ask how they would govern the Republic without exposing themselves to violate the latter in these permanent agitations; and how, men of conscience and reflection, might they accept a power descending from the laws, to exercise it in falsehood, believing knowingly the original titles of their authority.

It is with historical facts that such asseverations are proved. For some time past to the present, precisely when the laws were more advanced in liberal promises, there was scarcely a government not invested with extraordinary faculties, and our annals are the official chronicle of consecutive dictatorships.

It is not always right to blame the magistrates imputing to them fondness to abuse the supreme power, nor is it a pleasant burden, that exclusive responsibility in the exercise of power, for a discreet man who respects his name and wishes quietly to hand it over to the judgment of history. The truth is that the legislation in force since several years is not in accordance with the political practices, nor with the public customs, nor with the natural character.

To remedy this fundamental contradiction belongs to your illustrated reasoning, Legislators of the Republic, and thus you shall have done a work more civilizing, and of greater efficiency and more fruitful transcendancy to the future of the country, than all that might be done in other matters and in another form. I would change with pleasure my title of conqueror warrior for the title of philosophical legislator, because the triumphs by arms represents the temporal imposition of a flag of struggle, the consolidation and prestige of an authority that may perish with the man who represents it, while the affirmation of the laws in philosophy and in human knowledge, means social stability, political and juridical of the nation on a firm and ample basis, where it shall be able to develop without hindrances, without convulsions, and without deficiencies.

And such is the vow of the people.

Nobody can be deceived in the presence of this formidable outcry which has resounded in the whole circuit of the Republic and reaches the walls of the Capitol, as a powerful wave, irresistible

and subduing everything to mark out with indubitable eloquence the position itinerary to your criticism of legislators. In this solemn moment of national crisis we are going to the conquest of something sacred, we are going to the conquest of true liberty, of law, of peace; and as the cry of "*God wills it*" in the stentorian voice of the worthy Hermit resounded in other times cheering the crusaders, we can say to-day that there is heard in the ambient air of the country the decisive and not less powerful cry, "*The people wills it.*"

And this great movement of the spirits towards the ideal reform is redeemed since its origin of all indecorous suspicions, because it is not possible to suppose in the manner and occasion in which it is developing and imposing itself and ambitious subterfuge, a stupid prurient of permanence in power, as regards the present natural magistracy. No, it is not this process, as I had already a solemn opportunity to proclaim it, the petition of prorogation of the power of a man commencing the constitutional period which ought not to be altered, as you shall be able to see in the vow of the peoples, it would be ridiculous to suppose that we seek in the reform of the laws a selfish modification of the terms of the authority, or an ungrateful prolongation in the exercise of power. Yes, Legislators, this great thought is redeemed from such a shadow, and this ought to be sufficient in order that your patriotic criterion freely deliberates so that your ideas undertake their vigorous and sure flight towards the anxiously desired end.

In regard to me, I have performed the duty which was pointed out to me in the development of events and in the irresistible orientations of my conscience, and I have wished now to complete it exposing before you my ideas and convictions with the frankness of an honest man and the sincerity of my love for the country, demonstrated in all the acts of my life.

A careful labor and an unquestionable prudence require those momentous labors in which you are going to exercise your sovereign legislative and reformist faculty, so we would not expose ourselves to fall in the great work that we undertake, and to leave in discordance the needs and hopes of the peoples, the principles that claim predominance in the collection of laws, with the result that we shall offer to our contemporaries and our successors.

To do our work we have authority and favorable ambient air ; the first, conquered in the irrevocable imposition of the programme of restoration in all the manifestations of human exertions ; the second, formed by the popular will in the vast revelation that we all have witnessed.

After having established the firm basis of the laws that ought to rule the Republic, the work of the Government shall be less laborious ; politics and administration shall not carry within themselves the immorality of the unforeseen in their functions and their benefits, but they shall be the broad ways wherein intelligent and patriotic efforts shall reach success, the initial intention reaping honor, the country that needs the intelligence and good will of its sons more than their life, collecting advantages.

Such is my hope and my purpose in what may depend upon me, and with this object I have proclaimed already in publicly known occasions the urgent necessity of obliterating the frontiers of the parties to join in a single noble and exalted aspiration, the wishes of all patriots, to compact in a sublime oblation of the national soul the vehement desire of a successful future for the country we love, while the national rainbow blazing with the majesty of the eternal and sacred things in the capitol's summit, protects us and inspires in us that solid and consistent duty which, when rooted in the heart of citizens, realizes in history the beautiful ideal of a free and powerful nationality.

SENATORS AND DEPUTIES.

The work of peace, diligent aspiration of the restoration arms, begins already its work, and in coming to the detail of my report you will remark undoubtedly that there has not been lost an instant in the impulsion of the politics and the administration by the more ample and fruitful courses of prosperity, glory and harmony.

It is little for my ambition what has been done until to-day ; a scanty yield to the riches of my aspirations in the way of the welfare and the greatness of the country ; a poor contribution certainly, if compared with the amount of my good will to increase in better days our historical heap, exceeded until to-day by the mistaken and misfortunes of our past existence.

The fair weather has commenced, but just commenced. It seems still that the echo repeats in the vast and beautiful territory the sounds of the bugle, the crash in the battlefield makes our nerves shake still with the emotion of the fight, beautiful epic emotion, favorable to glory, stimulant of the martial laurel, but full of bitterness! And let it be allowed to me at this moment that it rebounds in the placid ambient air of the country to utter a cry of my conscience, of my spirit, that is in love with civilization and culture; my triumphs are painful to me. It is painful to me that the field where I have gathered the palm that crowns to-day my forehead were watered with blood of brothers. I regret to have been obliged to move my sword to fulminate guilty Venezuelans, obfuscated countrymen of ours. How much sorrow and what a cruel situation for my soul, simultaneously moved by pity and justice; by pity towards a countryman sunk in opprobrium and chastised by my arm; and by justice which imposes on one the duty of punishing brothers, not only guilty of heavy faults, but culprits of high treason.

So, then, the fair weather has just commenced; but we have already placed above the ravages of war, above the disasters of discord, the branch-symbol of the repairing labors, the effort of reconstruction above the moral ruins of the conventions admitted and consecrated for long, with the unfrangible purpose of substituting the falsehood predominant until now, with the refulgent truth of self-denying facts, of the heroic consecrations, and of principles to which henceforth the life of the Republic ought to be submitted to save itself and be prosperous and great in civilization.

HOME AFFAIRS.

I call your attention to the decree that rules the grant and use of the decoration of the bust of the Liberator. And I speak first of this because that Order of Honor, instituted in memory of the father of the country, the founder of five nations, to reward the exalted merit and the eminent servants of the Republic and of humanity, has become with deplorable complacency or resignation of a great many, but with regret of the patriots, an object of childish speculation, a way of satisfying cheap ambitions or silly

vanities, and a distinction favorable to the unserviceable. I disposed by said decree that the Executive could place a legal obstacle on the overflowing of foolishness in order to restore to that coveted premium its original splendor, and the respect that ought to inspire to all, national and foreigners, that institution sacred to honest men, in whom conscience have a voice the prerogatives of merit, and to soldiers of honor who are opposed to decorate unworthy or vacuous chests with the brilliant badge which is a guiding star for noble aspirations.

I have decreed the Code of Commerce, the Penal Code, and the Codes of Civil and Criminal Proceedings. Those standing were deficient and inadequate, and in the general plan of legal rectifications that history and public opinion have imposed on my criterion, I have thought urgent to sanction these new Codes, that as a forecast of the epoch ought to satisfy the necessities which those branches of the administration perpetuate.

The Code of Commerce was not revised since 1873. Thus, it was urgent to place it at the height of the modern commercial legislation and in accordance with the necessities made *evident* in the elapsed thirty years.

There is well regulated in this Code the working of the Exchanges and Chambers of Commerce and the conveyance by railway, not mentioned in the previous Code, the provisions of which in the matter reached only the droves of beasts of burden and the carts. Rules have been established to which should be submitted the promoters and subscribers of the companies, and also the constitution of these and the duties of the administrators, to offer to the stockholders a better knowledge of the acts of those functionaries and sufficient guarantees, even against the impositions of an unjust majority whichever; laws have been enacted as regards the foreign societies which make business in the country, and there is a chapter about the firms of commerce, to guarantee their legitimate use, and end the sham practice of companies in which there are no associates. We have substituted the old theory that considers the drafts of commerce as the result of a pact, the one that attributes to them the simple character of debentures of payment. In the matter of bankruptcies you will find

some important reforms, as the one that permits an honest merchant, momentarily in debt, to pay his arrears without becoming a bankrupt, and the one that subjects to brief and summary procedures the failures of minor amount ; and in the organizations of the Courts of Commerce the procedure by associates has been established as in the Civil Courts, to avoid the excuses of co-judges and the delays of suits.

The Codes of Proceeding simplify and make more efficient the terms that justice needs, for the positive safeguard of social order and the sanction of the principles in which this order rests and produces its benefits. As regards the Penal, I sincerely believe that the newest fills up in the best possible way the present exigencies of the society in which we live, and the objects attributed to it in legislation. It is developed upon a methodic and philosophic plan arranged for its clearer intelligence and practical applications. Considering the vital importance of this branch of the administration, which carries within the most essential and delicate of the public order, I have made efforts to give to this book the clearness it requires, so that the confusion of the precepts may not be an inducement to the sacrifice of equity ; personal pre-occupations distort the luminous rays of the law, spreading in the spirits of unhappy offenders the suspiciousness of an anticipated judgment or the sorrow of injustice.

After establishing as the sole division of the transgression of laws the crime and the fault, ideas which are clearly defined, enumerates in a conclusive way who are to be held responsible, stating and extending till it is possible among us, the causes that exempt, diminish or aggrieve the responsibility according to the scientific modern ideal. Extensively formulated the conception of the transgressions and the correlative penalties, the latter have been pointed out in the more conservative way with the spirit of justice, of guarantees and of democracy, that rules in our society.

The penal criterion has been until now very deficient among us ; with a prodigious rapidity of imagination we impetuously pass from the fragility of the juridical precept on an almost feminine sentimentalism that leaves the guilty unpunished or nearly so, to the cruel decisions which enrage the misguided minds, hurt the serene spirits and offend the immutable Providence, of whom the

powers worthy of government are implicitly delegates. I do not pretend that Mercy, the great and benefactress Mercy, be banished from the Courts of Justice, I only aspire to make it not a personal attribution, capriciously applied according to the will of the Magistrates, but to have it established and pre-eminent as a sparkle of the sovereignty of God and a glorious conquest of the Christian philosophy, in the same provisions of the law, in the discrimination of the transgressions and in the procedure for the application of penalties.

Thus, the present Code establishes for some crimes greater punishments than those formerly applied, and for some others lesser; and double punishments have been in general eliminated, since it is an equitable institution, as a principle of justice, not to impose for any transgression, two penalties of those qualified by the laws as principal.

Lastly, I have made efforts in order that the modifications, which the previous Codes required, and in these you will see accomplished -- (evidently substantial all of them) -- obey the tendencies of the epoch, that public opinion and the impositions of my submission to it desire to characterize as innovators, until there is established the true and fruitful relation between the laws and the customs that they should rule, since it is odious and practically impossible a legislation that does not agree, for being behind or in advance with the society that wants to obey it.

The report of Foreign Affairs will give you a notice of all the measures of political and administrative reorganization of the Republic, and you will see the thought of the Government in the election of his servants, and the reverence he has always rendered to truth and duty.

Your law of April 11, 1903, on the Rights and Duties of Foreigners in Venezuela, which I ordered to be executed on the 16th of the same month and year, gave motive to several questions proposed by the States, which were answered by the respective bureau, resolving that the foreigners residing in the sections of the Republic should present themselves spontaneously to accomplish what said law prescribes without the authorities taking coercive measures to that effect, remaining in fact under their action when the opportunity may arrive and subject consequently to the resolu-

tions of the National Executive, those that would not fulfil the established prescriptions. And it was also ruled the judicial procedure for the sequel of the claims, in order that those proceedings be filled in the conditions required by the probity and the interest of the nation.

As the Attorney General has been occupied with the labors that the Mixed Commissions created for him, said functionary was provisionally substituted in the remaining duties of his office by the Fiscal of the Republic, employment instituted with this object with the legal attribute of the other.

Ninety-three persons have solicited and obtained in this year letters of Venezuelan naturalization; and it is curious that precisely in these moments of crisis the amount of these new countrymen be greater than in the last thirty years of our natural life.

The mobilization of the live stock has been rapid and astonishing. The suppression of the previous taxes, suggested by the Federal Executive, has contributed to this result; and the exportation of the cattle has increased so much that I can consign it here as a fountain of labor and riches, which the Government commenced carefully to cultivate as soon as normalization returned to the Republic. From July, 1902, to December, 1903—eighteen months—77,489 heads of cattle were exported from Venezuela, and you will find the details and specifications in the respective report.

And not only those taxes on cattle were suppressed, but the others which the war and the past conflicts compelled to create in the sections, so that the industrial interests, agricultural and commercial, enjoy already the necessary conditions for their ample development, and the sectional governments punctually receive their legal allowance.

We have solemnly celebrated the feasts that patriotism consecrates to the commemoration of the great events of the Republic.

Our relations with the ecclesiastical authority have been discreet and cordial, and by the respective report you will know the satisfactory course and solution of what has happened that was grave and dangerous for the peace of the consciences and the free and decorous working of the Church and of worship. The Reverend Father Juan Bautista Castro, D.D., honorable and learned

priest, was proposed by the Government to Rome and accepted—owing to the deplorable sickness of Monsignor Uzcatagui—as Coadjutor Bishop of the Archdiocese of Caracas and Venezuela, with the right to succeed to this high dignity, and he is personally at Rome to be consecrated, making previously oath of fidelity to the laws of the Republic.

Venezuela, the Government and myself, have joined, disturbed by profound grief, the mourning of Christianity before the tomb of Leo XIII. The passing of that superior and illustrious man for the Holy See marks a radiant track in history and a sensation of relief in the human spirit. He honored Providence and humanity with the admirable exercise of all the attributes of extraordinary men, from the fine and transcendental diplomacy of the Pontifical Power, from the skilled politics and sublime piety, to the brilliant culture of learning and poetry which reminds the inspiration that vibrated in the Latium.

I give also to you, thinking men, of government and patriotism, my condolence for this always lamentable misfortune.

FOREIGN RELATIONS.

I now come to give you an account of our Foreign Relations, which, owing to the occurrence of events which are universally known, demanded at one time all the attention of the Government.

From the international conflict which was produced by the foreign aggression and the blockade of our coasts, arose great obligations, recorded in the Protocols signed at Washington, the fulfilment of which was unavoidable. To fight in defence of the dignity of the Republic, and to add to our classic examples of heroism new acts of valor, would have been relatively easy for one such as I am, always ready to offer sacrifice on the altars of my country, and for a people such as that of Venezuela, who do not take the enemy into account and know how to rise above the difficulties of the case, facing danger with that fearless attitude which is assured by their past deeds; it was not the work of war that fate demanded; but called upon us to have recourse to our almost exhausted national patrimony. It was not bravery, of which we had more than sufficient, that we needed; it was money, of which

we were deficient, that we had to find in order to safeguard the honor and the future of the Republic.

The struggle within the country complicated the situation to an extraordinary degree, for the rebels in that struggle were the principal promoters of that supreme danger of foreign intervention. Fortunately the ominous plan failed before the well considered action of the Government and our nationality avoided the shoal which arose so suddenly amidst the tempest through which we were passing.

The engagement to deliver immediately in cash money to the sum of B 2,031,023.35 pursuant to the provisions of the Washington Protocols, for the purpose of satisfying the peremptory demands of Germany, England and Italy, has been complied with; and on learning the decision which The Hague Court of Arbitration must shortly make the claimants will be able to receive a considerable sum on account of the credits recognized by the Mixed Commissions.

In fulfilment of its duty, the Executive carried into execution the provisions of your Resolution of the 28th of May, 1903, regarding the Protocols signed by the Agent of Venezuela and the Representatives of the Allied Powers. The same Agent afterwards signed other international agreements with the Representatives of France, Spain, Belgium, Holland, Sweden and Norway, the United States and Mexico, in virtue whereof the examination of the credits which the citizens and subjects of the said States had against the nation was submitted to a proceeding analogous to that arranged with England, Italy and Germany.

At the date when your last sessions terminated the said Protocols had not yet reached our Chancellery, but nevertheless it seemed both expedient and beneficial to put them also into immediate execution. The day appointed by them for the constitution of the Mixed Commissions was drawing near, and any delay in that constitution might have hurt the credit of the Government, which our word had so solemnly pledged. The Minister of this Department will give you a detailed account of these agreements, and will ask of you, as I also now do, an expression of opinion regarding the conduct which in that regard the Executive was obliged to observe.

The Arbitration Commissions which, in execution of the Protocols signed, were charged to examine and decide on the claims made against Venezuela, were installed at this capital on the first of June last past. In perfect independence the said bodies terminated their labors with the exception of three, which are still functioning. The total of the French, Spanish, Dutch, Swedish, Belgian and Mexican claims which have been recognized amounts to B 20,928,466.93.

The original amount of these claims was B 50,559,366.01 ; so that such a marked difference between what was claimed and what was justly due, is a proof that a mercantile and abusive spirit, had now as formerly, availed itself of our disturbances to achieve prosperity. This proof is another confirmation of the judgment already formed by experience of the Commissions established in former epochs with functionaries of the Republic and at the same time an efficacious argument against the opposition that this proceeding on the part of Venezuela has had to encounter in practice, and which is founded on the suspicion of partiality by which it has been desired to discredit the awards of the said Commissions.

The nation had given to foreign claimants the right to appeal to the High Federal Court, in cases in which they thought such a course necessitated by the decisions of the Boards for the Qualifying of Credits. In this way the path for obtaining justice was widened, and the Republic was placed in a position to discuss conveniently all demands brought against her. So that judicially and equitably speaking, these Arbitral Commissions have no *raison d'être*, when Governments recognize in accordance with the principles of Justice, as Venezuela has done, their national responsibility towards private individuals and their interests—be they nationals or foreigners—and consequently establish adequate proceedings for obtaining the compensation that should be demanded. And that legal right, established by the Decree of the 14th of February, 1873, received full and recent confirmation by our law of the past year on the rights and duties of foreigners, from which we should hope a sufficient guarantee in the future.

The force of events obliged us on this occasion to adopt a means which, although perfectly worthy of acceptance for deciding matters of another character—since it is entirely in accord with the

modern spirit of civilization, and is recommended by all thinkers, and also desired by all men of good will—is, in cases like the one in question, absolutely contrary to the noble designs of those who have advocated its adoption, since those matters which may affect the sovereignty of States, are, and must always be outside the generous and Christian orbit of the principle of arbitration. It is an elementary concept that the nation has the right to organize the administration of justice, being possessed of autonomous independence, so that the idea and the reality of that independence would be expressions wanting in sense if foreign powers had the faculty under any pretext whatsoever to administer justice or what they should fraudulently and capriciously use as such, to their subjects in foreign lands.

And this, in synthesis, was the thought that underlay the aggression which we have suffered. If anything can contribute to attenuate the hurt to our patriotism, in so glorious an emergency of our national life, and the fear of men that we can be preoccupied for the fate of our nationality, it is the conviction—which lies very deep in my conscience—that only under the shadow of our profound international disturbances, could it have been realized under the conditions which characterized it, and with the success which it obtained. In fact, those most deserving of the blame for it are the revolutionary Venezuelans who favored it by their conduct and by their connivance, occasioned and encouraged it, up to the point of making common cause with the foreigner, without thinking perhaps—or perhaps knowingly, that in exchange for the temporary support the revolution might achieve, at the cost of its credit and to its own shame, they were compromising the national integrity and the independence of the Republic. There is no pretext whatsoever which could render such an error plausible, it being in fact a great crime.

Such is my conviction in this regard and I consequently believe with abundant reason, that without the complicity of the revolutionists, the foreigners would not have come to our shores in the aggressive manner which they did. This example will remain for the edification of our patriotism and an eloquent lesson for future generations!

Of the awards made by the Mixed Commissions it was neces-

sary and obligatory for us to protest against the one relating to the claim made by the General Company of the Caracas Water Works. That award being in flagrant contradiction to the provisions of the Protocol and the principles of equity, the Republic could not admit it, as its recognition would have implied the abdication of its rights and the discredit of the arbitration; since if similar decisions were to be accepted, being in themselves null, the high ends which are sought by the institution of arbitration for the furtherance of harmony and justice would be turned to ridicule, as would also the trust and confidence which should be deserved by the judges. We had also to make a like protest against the sentence delivered by the respective umpire on appeal made from the Venezuelan-Mexican Commission. That sentence, which can only be qualified as absurd, occasioned surprise to everybody, and gave rise to an unpleasant situation for a diplomat who had until then been appreciated amongst us.

The Representative of the Republic refused formally and categorically to accord to the allied Powers preferential treatment for the payment of the claims of their nationals; and it was necessary to refer the matter, for definite decision, to the Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague, created by the Treaty of the 29th of July, 1899. Undoubtedly Venezuela could not, without being wanting in the most trivial rules of conduct, grant to a certain creditor, to the detriment of others, a favor for the granting of which there was not the slightest reason. To admit that the forcible manner adopted for the recovery of debts of foreigners, gave them preference, would display ignorance of the just principle of equality among nations, and to place forcible proceedings above the sound deliberations of justice; and at the same time to disregard and to refuse to follow precedents of a date not remote. We shall perhaps shortly know the award of the High Tribunal, and both we, the interested parties and all thinkers who advocate the effectiveness of the ideas which gave that Court life and being, cherish the hope that the sentence to be passed will give ample satisfaction to the cause which Venezuela has been maintaining, together with the majority of the States which took part in the recent judicial debates at The Hague.

Our political relations with the other nations grow daily closer

and more cordial, and this pleasing and praiseworthy end is in a high degree attributable to the distinguished gentlemen who exercise diplomatic functions in Venezuela.

Nothing has recently altered our friendship with the nations of the world, but the suspension of our amicable intercourse with the Republic of Colombia, which, as you know, was determined by a public manifestation of the Executive of that nation. Venezuela wishes, as in different occasions has proved, even at the expense of the blood of its sons, that the bond of solidarity among the sister nationalities that form this continent, shall grow stronger each time, not only because that bond is real in blood and in history, but because the present conveniences of international politics require it. I have no words vivid enough to extol the importance of this thought, its transcendancy in the South American destiny! Only being united, we shall be able to grow strong, during the time that each of these people shall not be so within its own frontiers, definitively to impose a conduct of peace and justice, and above all of respect, in conformity with the philosophical aspirations of the epoch, which preserving internal tranquility, may convey us, through ample and sure ways, to an attitude which shall guarantee our international prerogative and our common interests in the continental domain.

This is the aspiration of my conscience and the vow of my spirit, and if up to this date Venezuela has not re-established its intercourse—which should be not only political but fraternal—with our sister, the neighbor Republic of Colombia, it has been with my greatest regret.

As to the other nations with whom we entertain friendly relations, it gives me pleasure to tell you that now as hitherto, Venezuela is willing to contribute in the measure of her strength and the sphere of her faculties, to work with them in favor of the magnificent work of drawing nearer to each other as recommended by justice and civilization.

From the beginning of its existence as a Sovereign State Venezuela has been granting to the foreigner such facilities as he needs to freely and quietly obtain the realization of his lawful aspirations. She was thus in advance of that movement which more ancient nations were to effect years afterwards, with the identical

spirit of liberality, by which means she desired not only to assure to the Republic the concurrence which those foreign energies could offer for her aggrandizement, and which in young nations are vigorous contributions to prosperity, but she had the further object of clearly establishing a principle which, in the course of time, would be converted into an indisputable maxim.

The foreigner was placed on an equal footing with the native in everything concerning civil rights, and like him having at his disposal all the means necessary for the development of his activities, his condition was assured on the basis of a perfectly favorable welcome. The laws of Venezuela have raised no obstacle whatsoever to foreign initiative, but have rather encouraged and strengthened it. Neither as regards our navigation, nor in the laws which protect life and property, nor in the rules for the guardianship of the family and the individual, has the Republic in any way been heedless of the protection which the State grants to foreigners, for the same reason as to nationals.

All generous ideas of human interest have always been readily received by our Governments; and whenever civilization has required our concurrence, in any work destined to the common good, the Republic has given in the best way all that it could.

It is certain that, to our honor, at no time has she abandoned the defence of her sovereign rights and that, jealous of her inherent prerogatives, she has done all that was necessary to preserve intact her status as a free people. But that very purpose, far from being an anchor for the realization of a plan of harmony and confraternity, is a means of carrying her on to wreckage. Love of one's native country and home, as also the invincible desire to maintain the honor of the nation, has always been the starting point of well understood expansion and correspondence; because without the respect claimed by every fatherland for itself and which its representatives and functionaries are under the obligation of maintaining, both international law and the principles consecrated by that law, would be impossible.

Thus, the national limitations which Venezuela has established for the admission of foreigners, and which, during the past year had to be made clear with two of the Legations accredited here, should not be considered as derogatory to the principles of equality

to which I have referred. Without those rules which can be considered as provisions for the political organization and the public tranquility, the consequences which the nationality carries with it would have been nullified and the limits which separate the legitimate jurisdiction of nations would be obliterated.

If the foreigner, through the sole fact of establishing himself in a country, were entirely assimilated to the persons with whom he enters upon a new life, it is clear there would be no reason for the existence of the limits referred to; but as the like assimilation is impossible, it being granted that the tie existing between the citizen and the State is not extinguished by absence alone from the fatherland, a line must necessarily be traced to mark out the sphere of action of natives and foreigners. The same can be said as regards everything which bears relation to the obedience due by foreigners to local laws, because if they were allowed to invoke at every step and not in the special circumstances indicated by law, the protection of their country, and a preferential treatment which would be wrought to the reason which the country had for offering them the same advantages, which as members of the human race, natives enjoy, and the faculty, contemporary and consubstantial would place them in a better condition than nationals, an injury with the State to, give itself an organization and proper laws, which should be complied with without contradiction throughout the territory, would be not only outraged but destroyed.

Our friendship with the English nation is cordial, now that on both sides the best will is being given to overcome those passing difficulties which sometimes arise through the interest of the moment.

The demarcation of our frontiers with British Guayana goes on. The commissioners are to-day busy on the outline of the section of the boundary that requires from them the greatest efforts, inasmuch as they are working in spots unknown and separated from centers of population. Everything, notwithstanding, makes us expect that the work shall be ended at a not distant date.

One of the members of our commission died lately at the city of Demerara, and the Colonial Government paid honors to his corpse. I have well appreciated this proof of friendship and courtesy, undoubtedly arisen from our affectionate correspondence with the United Kingdom.

The British Representative has again brought forward the question of the suppression of the differential duty on merchandise proceeding from the West Indies. For the purpose of arriving at an agreement the English Government have informed us of their willingness to prohibit the exportation of arms from the neighboring island of Trinidad, to co-operate with Venezuela to hinder smuggling, and to take off the duty now imposed on our cattle in that island. In my message of 1902 I spoke to you on this subject whose importance demands your attention. Only Congress can repeal the decree of the 4th of July, 1861, which established the duty in question.

Our relations with France continue on the harmonious footing on which they were renewed. The Diplomatic Agent whom the Republic accredited near the French Government was courteously received by the chief of the French nation, to whom our Minister signified the pleasure with which Venezuela would see the mutual currents of sympathy which exist between the two nations render permanent in our political intercourse that character of complete cordiality and sincere understanding that it has long demanded.

The commercial convention with France, approved by you in the year 1902, and which was afterwards ratified and exchanged, is already regulating the mercantile relations of the two Republics and producing excellent results.

Venezuela has fulfilled the obligations which she undertook by the Paris Protocol of the 19th of February, 1902. In fact a provisional certificate for a million bolivars, for the purpose of satisfying claims for damages suffered by French citizens in the revolution of 1902, was in due time handed to the French Legation. This certificate will be exchanged for notes of the 3% Diplomatic Debt on the Legation knowing the sum assigned by the French Government to each claimant. The sums which the Franco-Venezuelan Mixed Commission, organized pursuant to the said Protocol of 1902, recognized in favor of some of those who made claims against the Republic have also been delivered to the Legation, in scrip of the same debt. I cannot yet give you an account of the total amount which Venezuela will have to pay to the French Republic for its nationals, for the persons who had been appointed as

umpires of the said Commission, eight claims amounting to B 42,988,047.50 still remain pending.

From the time of their renewal our relations with Germany have been receiving all the interest which they deserve. Both nations possess in Venezuela important motives of concord, and their sons, who have been long established in the country, have always had all kinds of facilities amongst us. I think we should not economize our efforts to attract to our shores sound ethnical elements of those nationalities, who on mixing with their already domiciled compatriots, come under the shelter of our laws, to devote themselves to fruitful work to their own advantage and that of the country which receives them with a good will.

During the past year we had to lament an incident which took place in our relations with Spain, occasioned by the conduct of a consular functionary of that nation. In view of the offence committed against the civil jurisdiction of the Republic, the Government could only exercise the faculty which it had, to withdraw, in cases of the like nature, the exequatur which had been granted to the Consul. Our sentiments towards Spain are not unknown. The Republic highly esteems the friendship of the mother country, and has with solicitous interest, shown on different occasions, its firm wish to nullify the means which conduce to their drawing nearer to each other in an affectionate and permanent manner.

Venezuela was represented by one of our physicians at the first assembly of the Spanish-American Medical Union, whose labors aim to make closer, by means of the intercourse of scientific men, the lovely bonds that joins Spain and Latin America. It was grateful and creditable for us that that learned corporation, under proposal of a distinguished Spanish physician, would resolve the erection at this capital of a monument consecrated to the memory of Doctor Don Francisco Javier de Balmis, introducer of the vaccine virus in America.

We have continued to treat with the Governments of Holland and Belgium in the most friendly manner, and the Honorable Representatives of those States in Venezuela, contribute to the permanence of that pleasing situation. It was lately resolved to accredit to the latter of these nations a diplomatic representative with the character of Minister Resident. The person nominated to that

post will shortly present his Letters of Cr dence and we have intimated this to the Belgian Legation at Caracas.

His Holiness Pius X. deigned to impart to me his exaltation to the Pontifical See, and in the answer I gave him I did not omit laying the intense gratification with which the Government of the Republic received the intelligence of his election, and also the rejoicing with which we have followed the beginnings of his Pontificate.

In order to make more evident the friendly zeal of the Republic in his dealings with the Holy See, it was considered timely to accredit, as it was done, a first-class Legation before the Vatican.

Our relations with the United States are perfectly harmonious and cordial and the marks of deference shown us by that great nation daily make them more frank and friendly. We must remember as a proof of that harmony and cordiality the interest which the President and people of the American Union exhibited towards Venezuela in the principal days of the international conflict. The good offices of the first Magistrate of that friendly nation were more than once interposed to obtain a pacific solution of the matter, exempt from the proceedings which were then proudly being taken against us.

With the object of signifying to the people of the great Republic the gratitude of Venezuela for its friendly proceeding, and also with the purpose of rendering our political relations firmer, it was resolved last year to re-establish the Venezuelan Legation at Washington. The compatriot whom the Government named as chief of that office received a courteous welcome from the President of the United States, as you can see from the speeches delivered on our Minister presenting his Letters of Credence.

Like our Legation in Washington, the Diplomatic Representative whom the American Government has in Venezuela, devotes his attention to the maintenance and development of the good understanding which, happily, exists between the two States.

Our Republic having been invited in many occasions to attend the Exhibition that the United States are preparing to celebrate the anniversary of the acquisition of the old Territory of Louisiana, our participation in that Exhibition was lately decided, as a proof

of the esteem we entertain towards that friendly people. Said participation, consonant with the present situation of the Republic, owing to powerful motives, is not to be so important as we would have desired.

Venezuela keeps friendly intercourse with the Republic of Chile by means of the Legation which that sister nation has established with us. The distinguished diplomatic in charge of this Legation came back to Caracas some months ago, and I have been enabled once more to take notice of his sentiments and those of his Government in favor of the progress of Venezuela. I have always tried to return so expressive proofs of esteem by reminding the representative of the intelligent Chilean nation of the sincere desires of Venezuela for the greatest happiness and prosperity of his country.

The circumstances of having established the Argentine Republic in Venezuela a General Consulate has been a propitious opportunity to express our admiration for this great people, that after having gone through painful epochs of turbulence and blood, has been able to resort to the ample home of civilization, by the intelligence and patriotic sense of its statesmen, realizing in a few years wonderful progress, and offering to us sons of the convulsive tropic an example of powerful eloquence. I consign here the vow I make for the uninterrupted aggrandizement of the great country of San Martin.

The Dominican Republic keeps its Legation in Caracas, and we have known with regret of the revolutionary occurrence evolving in that country since some months. God grant that peace may prevail soon again in that friendly country.

I very much desire that prosperity may reign in Nicaragua, a friendly and brotherly country. I had followed with the greatest interest the probabilities that, by a colossal enterprise contrived by a great financial power, that Republic might reach the benefits it deserves; and the Nicaraguan people and its enlightened Government are acquainted with this fraternal interest.

The Honorable Don Pedro Jose Escalon deigned to inform me of his election as Constitutional President of the Republic of Salvador, which office he commenced to perform on the first of March of last year. In my answer to his letter I expressed my wishes

of the continuance in the intercourse between the two Republics of the same cordiality that has always characterized it.

I received the same information from the Honorable Don Jose Battle y Ordines, who was called, by the vote of the General Assembly of the Oriental Republic of Uruguay, to rule the destinies of that friendly country, whose well-being and progress I wish with the greatest sincerity.

At the end of the presidential period for which Honorable Doctor M. Ferrera de Salles was elected, Honorable Doctor Francisco de Paula Rodrigues Alves assumed the Constitutional Presidency of the United States of Brazil. I answered with great satisfaction the letter of the new Magistrate, and in reference to the purpose that he exhibits of tightening the friendship existing between the two countries, I made known to him with pleasure that those purposes would find in me effective and decided assistance to correspond, as much to the sentiments of the nation, as to my personal aspirations.

On the first of February of last year Honorable General Manuel Bonilla assumed the exercise of the supreme power of the Republic of Honduras, which information he imparted to me in his letter of June 9th of the same year. I addressed a short time after to the new President of said Republic with which we wish to tighten the existing relations, my congratulations for the proof of confidence his fellow-citizens have given to him.

The Republic of Peru elected in the last months of the past year, according to its Constitution, the Honorable Don Manuel Candamo as its President, who made me known his designation in a very estimable letter. I immediately answered him, expressing the hope that during his administration the cordial relations which happily join us shall be increased.

An occurrence of much gravity and of unquestionable transcendancy happened recently in Spanish America; the Colombian Department of Panama has segregated from the Republic of Colombia and constituted an independent nation.

In the respective report you will find the notes that the Provisional Government of the new State has addressed to us, and my answer of February the third.

That movement has a great significance in American politics,

and has been for me a motive of serious reflections. The fact that the citizens of the Isthmus have unanimously determined, as the Provisional Government announces, its erection in an independent sovereignty, is of great eloquence for those that are able to follow in history the march and interlocking of events, the concentration of ideas and facts and the consequences of both, across time and through the dark and partial contingencies of the mistakes and passionate aberrations of men. The independence of Panama is the tacit sanctions of the forecasts of the Father of Colombia. In the future development of the creation of that mass who nourished with the truth and the unavoidable laws of history, the great visions that his soul commissioned his genius to realize, he had assigned to Panama a place of superior and decisive pre-eminence; unfortunately, the Isthmus did not arrive to it by the route that Bolivar marked out, but by the permanent deviations of intelligence and foresight in our races. Panama did not arrive to fulfil its natural destiny with the logic of greatness conceived by the Liberator, but by the painful process of disintegration—but arrived.

The new Republic has been recognized by many nations, and Venezuela did not refuse to give it a friendly word. Department or Republic. Panama is our brother, represents a familiar entity in our history, a sparkle of the nimbus of the great Colombia, a name very much attached to what we love the most as men of thought, and we venerate the most as patriots.

For my part, I believe in justice, and accept it and respect it with all its consequences, so I cannot dodge my sympathy to the new nation, and from here I send my greetings to its flag, with my wishes of well-being and progress.

The state of our treasury, and the necessity to attend to urgent and unforeseen obligations, have made it impossible to re-establish completely the payment of what we owe by reason of diplomatic agreements. At present, everything augurs prosperity and success of the Republic, so that we will soon be able to fulfil strictly our obligations.

With the alluring outlook that the state of our international relations presents to-day we can well devote ourselves to the necessary and grateful labor of invigorating and extending them, in order that sheltered in the interior by peace, and outward by

respect, we shall be able to realize without impediment the high ends of the welfare of the nation.

TREASURY.

The fiscal report is to be short, but eloquent. I present to you here in summary extracts some data that you will find amplified and in minutely precise details in the respective report.

In virtue of the authorization which Congress bestowed upon the National Executive in its Decree of April 11, 1903, I ordered on May 8th of the same year the coining of B. 4,000,000 silver by the Philadelphia mint (one Bolivar is equivalent to one franc).

Of these, three million bolivars had arrived at the Custom House at La Guayra up to the 31st of December, and in January arrived the rest of the coinage, one million bolivars. The total cost of this silver and its coinage was B. 1,383,216.06.

The salt mines of the Republic produced in the economic year ended June 30, 1903, the amount of B. 1,478,653.92. This yield is almost 50 per cent. of what the same branch produced in the previous year, but such a decrease is natural and even small, if we consider the period in which it was accomplished.

The paralyzation of the account of Titles of Salt Mines was absolute until the month of August, in which the Government resolved to apply to its payment all the receipts since that month; with that application and the amounts credited for transfer of the contribution of war, we have verified until to-day seventeen drawings that reduce the balance of the account to B. 3,050,500.

The blockade converted the salt in a precious article attractive to speculators, so that after a few days the merchants had made it rise to B180 the *fanega* (x).

I could not remain impassible in the presence of such a scandal, the odious and cruel monopoly of an article of unavoidable necessity, which cast a new misfortune to the people, the first victim of such mischievousness; in consequence, I ordered the immediate exploitation of the salt mines of Guaiguaza for account of the Government, and the establishment of salt stores in Caracas, Puerto Cabello, Valencia, Cagua, Ciudad de Cura and La Victoria, in order that the sale might continue for equitable prices. In this way the Government frustrated the spec-

tacular tendency, and at the same time opened a source of receipts, modest but opportune, to help its many necessities.

This exploitation lasted for three months, and the pulling out of 2,826 fanegas, which was its work, was made with B4239, at the price of B. 1.50 fanega, agreed with the owners of the salt mines.

The immobility of the account of the Titles of 1 per cent. has produced an increase in it. The stock in circulation is B. 3,360,-596.13, to which amount the interests, up to the 31st of last December, footing B. 2,250,781.44, has been added. The balance of this account up to that date is consequently B. 5,611,377.56.

As you will see in the report, the stock of sealed paper on the 1st of January of this year was B. 546,144.

As the entrance fees of the custom houses of La Guayra and Puerto Cabello were encumbered with the 30 per cent. compromised by the protocols of Washington, the Government was obliged to establish the Extraordinary Contribution of War by the Decree that you will see in the respective report B. 9,760,-172.50 were produced by this tax, which was necessary to avoid the financial disaster of the Government in such critical circumstances as those of the last times; and in behalf of that receipt we were able to attend to imperious obligations, the gravity and urgency of which you will know by the specifications of the report.

In the complete disorder to which the war brought the Republic, and in the straitness to which the Administration was submitted, it was necessary to interrupt the payment of the legal allowance of the States; and according as the nation recovered, I have been disposing the gradual re-establishment of those expenses, until its realization, which has been made since the last months of last year, in the amounts and conditions prescribed by the Executive Decree of April 25, 1901. By this respect, the National Treasury has paid B. 1,435,272.16.

On the 31st December, 1902, the balance of the account of the Government with the Bank of Venezuela was of B. 10,495,193.89 against the Government. That balance was in December 31st, 1903, B. 3,215,992.61, and we have continued paying it, so that at this date it is reduced to less than 1,500,000 bolivars.

With charge to the branches of the Public service and expenses of the war, we have made the following payments:

Repairs of the vessels of the Navy, materials for telegraph, elements of war, land and sea artillery, coal, etc.	B1,910,137.42
Balance and interests of the price of the steamer "Augusto," to-day Zumbador.	178,333.33
Settlements for balances of credits against the nation, of Messrs. A. Luisi, Blohm & Co., Victor Grassus, J. B. Matharan, H. L. Boulton & Co., and Pedro Sturup, representative of Th. Gibbs	136,804.42
Price of a house for barracks in La Victoria....	12,000.00
Postal debt	20,722.40
Furniture for the church of La Pastora.....	4,834.41
Musical instruments for San Cristobal.....	533.15
Credited on account of the credits of the Commissions of limits with Colombia and British Guiana	172,511.92
Fleets and passages for the railways of the Republic and for the corporation of the port of La Guayra	472,581.64
Exposition of St. Louis.....	13,600.00
Medicines, artificial members and surgery instruments for the hospitals and for the army.....	112,722.83
Forty-five thousand nine hundred and thirty-eight equipments, Kepis, hats, blankets, steel arms, shoes and uniforms for the National Army	882,379.25
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	B3,917,160.77

Resuming, I present to you here the following tables of the general movement of the revenue from the 1st of January to the 31st December, 1903:

ENTRANCE

Maritime duties	B21,102,827.53
Tax on transit.....	5,731,292.66
Transfer of the account of salt mines.....	1,318,615.08

Transfer of the account loan of 1903.	341,266.56
Coining of silver.	3,000,000.00
Several	3,000,410.25

B34,494,412.08

EXPENSE.

Public service	B10,316,619.02
Expense of war.	10,962,628.63
Income of the States.	1,435,272.16
Expenses for the coining of silver, including ten pairs of dies.	1,386,752.06
Transfer to different accounts.	259,153.95
Public works	1,100,070.77
Public instruction	705,917.99
Transferred to Messrs. H. L. Boulton & Co. for the 30 per cent. of the Custom House collec- tion at La Guayra and Puerto Cabello, accord- ing to the protocols of Washington.	4,183,804.98
To the Bank of Venezuela.	3,979,201.29
Cash in Treasury on the 31st December.	164,991.32

B34,494,412.08

We have in the Bank of Venezuela a stock in postage stamps amounting to B. 19,595,232.55.

The stock of salt-policies is up to date for value of B. 4,892,-765, according to the demonstration that you will find in the respective report, where you will also see the movement of Bills of Navigation and the Statistics of National Properties and of Exportation and Importation.

The account of the Debts of the Republic is as follows :

Internal debt	B70,130,422.04
Pending interests	22,852,666.63

B92,983,088.67

External debt	B125,363,494.86
Pending interests	26,281,926.22

B151,645,421.08

Total amounts :	
Titles of debt.....	B.195,493,916.90
Interests	49,134,592.75
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	B.244,628,509.85

PUBLIC WORKS.

The service of Post Offices and Telegraphs works correctly. The Government has endeavored to carry these branches of the Administration to its best efficiency, and the Republic can be satisfied that, if in the short time that has been allowed to me, to devote myself to the reconstruction and the tempests which blew on it the breath of disaster, I have already succeeded in reorganizing such important branches of the service, placing them in conditions of indefinitely advancing at the step of progress, when public order in all its manifestations shall be consolidated we shall be able to be proud of having a civilized country, where life may not offer anxieties, nor difficulties to labor in its amplest development, nor to the social mechanism in the solicitation of its destinies, that may well be great and glorious if we apply to them intelligence, patriotism and good sense.

Twenty-six principal post offices and one hundred and eighty-five branches are in the country, and for its support in the first economic six months B. 49,582.18 have been spent, without reckoning some late important expenses, of which I shall mention those occasioned by the installation of Helios apparatus to disinfect the correspondence in Caracas, La Guayra, Puerto Cabello and Carupano, which are the four central offices of dispatch. This precaution, and some others were taken by the awful emergency of the plague in Marseille and the menace of invasion through the Pacific of the same calamity.

Wishing to provide the press so necessary an element to life and intelligence in these times—with the greatest advantages and franchises, I disposed to establish in the General Direction, a specially destined service for the dispatch of the newspapers to the interior of the Republic. The postal interview movement cost in the period named B. 438,242.

We have a lawsuit with the Post master of Trinidad for that

post-office having accepted in the postal exchange illegitimate stamps used by the *revolutionaries* of Guayana. The dignity of the Republic and the honor of the Government in the matter have been actively and energetically defended, the colonial office having declared for our satisfaction, that when the fact went to its knowledge, the correspondence was considered not prepaid. This business, as the others which are connected with the respect that we owe to the country and ought to require from all in its behalf, will be conducted—rely on it—by the high notion of patriotism that the Government has.

The contract made for the collection of the sale of postage stamps has been producing foreseen results. In the three years previous to its celebration, that is, 1898, 1899 and 1900, that sale produced an average of B. 905,500, and that this average raised to B. 1,961,000 in the following years of 1901, 1902 and 1903, which, as you know, brought with them an abundant provision of catastrophes.

The telegraphic lines have 6,480 kilometers, and its estimate has been in the year B. 1,210,014.62—129 offices are at present working, including those of Santa Ana del Tachira and Ureva, of recent creation, with its lines of concession already built. The importations of materials made directly by the same direction of the branch, without counting those that the Minister of the Treasury details in its report, foot up B. 51,122.

The telegraph produced in the economic quarters, placed in the account the last days of the war, B. 124,985.35, and the Government has paid for its cablegram B. 13,442.08.

Observed by the Government and categorically denounced by the Chamber of Commerce the precarious service of the French Cable, owing to frequent interruptions in the line, the Attorney-General has received orders to ask before the High Federal Court the rescission of the agreement made with said Company, in order to solicit, in more advantageous conditions for the public and for the Government, the reinstalment of the wire which should conjoin us in a more stable, rapid and equitable way with the foreign world.

I have disposed the construction of two cables, one between the Puertos de Altigracia and Bella Vista, Maracaibo, and the

other between Cindad Balivar and Soledad, the sum of B. 24,-934.60• was assigned for these cables which shall undoubtedly render great benefits to the general interests of those districts.

The instalment of the official telephonic system with 66 apparatus costs to the Government B. 32,297.67, and works in 207 kilometers; 92 foreigners and 125 urbans. It is superfluous to extol the advantages that render to the service this prodigious electrical handiwork, the application of which in its own lines the Government is extending every time more for the best efficiency of the official determinations.

I think always on the organization of statistics. Convinced of the great importance that has that administrative branch in the government and progress of the peoples, I endeavor to make it between us a possible perfection, and I think that during the short time of order, in which we have been able to give to it, is already producing its fruits, of which the first and not less important is having enforced in many authorities, generally refractory before, the interest and probity which the punctual and conscientious compilation of data requires.

I must remind you that since 1891 no census of the nation has been made.

I have decreed the Code of Mines; it belongs to precepts to establish the jurisprudence that should rule in this matter designed to produce so many increments and benefits to the Republic with the scientific and productive mobilization of its subterranean riches, guaranteeing the efforts of the laborer and the security of the property.

Eleven definite titles of mines were issued during this year: 5 of asphalt, 3 of coal and 3 of copper; and 7 adjudications of lands for breeding cattle, one of them gratuitous. The mining taxes came up to B. 6,636.12, and the value received for the waste land B. 2,906.73.

The Government has made in the course of the report three stipulations which I consider profitable to the Republic; the administration and colonization of the Island Tortuga and those of the group called Los Roques for fifteen years; to establish a paper factory for twenty-five years; and the auction for B. 72,000 per year of the tax on the fishing of pearls, which had produced

to the National Treasury, until the celebration of said contract, B. 52,110. That industry was carefully regulated, and its exportation, scientific as it is and ought to be, shall render great benefits to the privileged Neo-Spartan region.

The Government declared the caducity of 338 mine concessions and 17 mine contracts, because the legal statutes had not been executed; of two emphyteutic contracts; of one for the exploitation of natural lands on the borders of the rivers Pacimoni and Baria; of another for the exploitation and seeding of India rubber and gutta-percha on the Zulia, another for the exploitation and cultivation of Los Roques. In this matter the Government has been severe, and intends to continue so, in order to put an end to the old tendency of asking contracts to the Government with purposes of transient and perhaps not very licit speculation, without thinking to execute them nor produce to the Republic the natural yield of its unexploited riches.

There were issued nine patents of invention, five to natives that were exonerated from the payment of the respective duties, and four that paid B. 2500; and official protection has been allowed to five trade-marks and nineteen factory marks.

We have devoted special attention and effective activity to works of public utility and improvement.

The Central University was repaired, rebuilt the penitentiary fortresses of the West and Centre and the Academy of Fine Arts; edified the Military Command of the Federal District, macadamized the avenue of Paradise, the bridge Regeneration and some other streets set up, the piping that carries water to the plain of Cajigal Hill, where the building of the Military Academy, decreed and appraised in B. 1,278,000 more or less, has been commenced; the road from Santa Lucia to Altagracia de Orituco has been reopened, and a reproduction of the picture of the Battle of Jumin has been made.

The aqueducts of Independencia, Juan Griego, Porlamar and Valera are in construction, and some modifications are being made to the one of El Valle; the building for a first-class college in Independencia, the Government house of San Cristobal, the bridge Restauracion in Valencia and another on the river Quini-mari; the highroads from Puerto Cabello to San Felipe and from

Merida to Palmarito, the statue of Colon for the boulevard Macuro and the one of the brave Paéz, equestrian and in native dress, to make more vivid and graphic the reminding of his exploits in the fight for the country.

We have repaired the buildings of Foreign Affairs, Public Works, Improvements, National Printing Office and Park; the old Military Command of the Federal District, the barracks of San Mauricio and El Hoyo at Caracas, Anzoategui at Valecia and the one of Maracay; the Panteon, the Academies of History and Language, the Alms House, the Insane Asylum of Catia, the Military Hospital and the Public Prison; the street of La Victoria and Valencia, the castles of San Carlos and the Light House at La Guayra and the fort Solano at Puerto Cabello; the parlors of the Federal Palace, the Municipal Theatre, the Bridge of Paradise, the sidewalks of the square of La Pastora, the tunnel of Calvario, the iron bridge Regeneracion, the Plaza Bolivar of Independencia, the highroads from Caracas to La Guayra, from the south, from the west, and the road from Ocumare del Tuy to Camatagua.

I have helped Guarenas, Charallave, Guatire and Los Teques, for their urban improvement, with amount very inferior to my wish of favoring these laborious populations.

Agreements have already been made for the very important works of the Piers of Carupano, a railroad in the Yuruary territory, and the canalization of the river Tuy and its affluents; and they are in way of construction, after reflective studies, the custom houses of Macuro and Tucacas, works of incalculable profit for meritorious regions of the country.

I do not doubt that you will see, in considering these works, the good will that has presided in the Administration, when we have undertaken and realized them in moments so full of anguish for the Treasury, and so abundant in other attentions, so much more exacting as they were profoundly painful.

The public works in exploitation are the following: the waters of Caracas, the aqueducts of Valencia, Guanare and Coro, the railways to La Guayra and Valencia, from Valencia to Puerto Cabello, that of Bolivar, that from La Vela to Coro; those of La Ceiba and of Tachira, that from the south, the Central of

Venezuela and the one from Maiquetia to Macuto, the railway and the mines of Guantá, the ports of La Guayra and La Ceiba and the piers of Puerto Cabello, La Ceiba and Cumerebo, and the aerial cable of the sulphur mines of the district of Benitez to Carupano.

WAR AND NAVY.

I have decreed the Military and War Navy Codes to substitute ; the first, the one that is in force since 1882, and the second, the General Ordinances of the Spanish Navy of 1793, with the exception of the Title VII., Treatise V., in reference to ports and havens ; so that this Code of War Navy is the first that has been enacted in Venezuela.

I have not to enhance the huge meaning of arms in the development of national life, which is of categoric evidence. And I am convinced that if Venezuela had formed the army since it was needed, upon the scientific and truly institutional basis which requires to fulfil the high ends belonging to it in the universal life of nations, we could offer to civilization a more fruitful, more honorable and surely more illustrious history ! Uprisings misguided in the madness of ambition would not have had the support of sword, as we have seen it a number of times ; the sabre would not have wounded, as we have witnessed in many occasions, the majesty of laws ; the Power, as almost always has done, would not have brandished the steel which carries stamped upon it the blazon of the Republic, to shift the country from its prosperous and perhaps glorious course, and lastly, we would not have been present, in different epochs, to the pitiful spectacle of the mean cutlass, guilty of all barbarisms—lifting itself up threatening over the forehead of intimidated society, making shrink back and wither, like sensitive plants, right and culture, which do not live of bloodshed in demagogic insanity, but of the beautiful labor of thought, of the generous activity of ideas, when they, themselves, do not imperiously consecrate, as in the great political and social transformations, the baptism of sorrow, the redemption of holocaust, whence those two lofty pre-eminences of human soul come forth ; in the same manner as in the tempestu-

ous period of stubborn and bloody struggle that the Liberal Restoration has so gloriously ended.

Because, if the urgent needs of public health, if the fixed thought to save the country which tyrannized any mind, if the high, sublime ideal of national rehabilitation, which raised my spirit towards that radiant Tabor, that in all times of history is the critical point of the new life of a people; placed in my hand the sword of Revolution, of this revolution which I have been realizing until I have crowned it with the noisy and definitive chastisement imposed to militarism in fields of blood, and to the old speculators with imperishable examples of abnegation and moral energy; if this egregious patriotic Cause armed my hand with the sword of battles, and the stupid resistance of old corruptions has sowed the territory of the Republic with deep furrows of devastation and signs of mourning, it is because in the mysterious deliberation of the destinies of the country, this frightful epoch has been the happy gestation, whose dawn we all can see advancing in the serene horizon. And inasmuch as the martial courage of our countrymen, and the consequent misuse of arms, arbitrarily or capriciously grasped under the impulse of savage impetuosity or grim machinations, have filled up our annals with shame and spread sufferings and misery in our life, whose same arms, converted by the efficacy of the restorer ideal in palladium of progress, of order, and of the consolidation of redeeming institutions, shall henceforth be one of the most perfect agents of the future. And it is not only as an imposition of my public duty, but as a result of my experience and profound conviction that I need to endeavor to make the national army and navy institutions of scientific basis and expansive activity flattering to the culture of an intelligent people and to the seriousness of a respectable nation.

This is an affair which claims the attention of rudimentarily discreet persons, but it has also been adverse by its own nature to the common forecast of the politicians by trade in our democracy, till now fickle and convulsive enough, and this is the reason why I have found the military notions of my country after a century of warlike exercise, very far behind the glorious essays realized by our liberators.

It is thus my purpose to go on studying all that appertains to such an important matter, to go setting at work the plans of modification, already foreseen in the Government's criterion, which commence with the institution of the Military Academy, that I have decreed, and is presently in execution, and of which I wish to give you an idea in the copies of the plan that gained prizes which I embody in this message as an appendix.

PUBLIC INSTRUCTION.

When a statesman, sincere, and wishing to do good and to contribute to the greatness of his country, thinks about the branch of Government that attends to the Public Instruction, he will necessarily experience the attraction of the future, which raises his spirit in a dream of glory, because no other matter of the Government of peoples carries within itself an importance so positive, so intrinsic and so fruitful in profits or remote consequences. So that you, appreciating with fairness the good intention, and the probity and conscience with which I try to fulfil the high duties that the nation has pointed out to me, will be able to suppose the disappointment of my spirit and the profound pain of my heart, seeing my activity restricted and all the preference of my attention given to the fighting and sorrowful part of my civilizing commission, feeling myself obliged to put a gun in the hands of men and lead them along to the triumphs of war, instead of a book, a tool of work or an instrument of art, to carry him to crop the rich vintages of peace, which is my ideal inspiration!

Nevertheless, I have profited by the incipient normality to begin to impulse the vast gear of Instruction. The National Colleges of male and female in all the States of the Republic have been already reinstalled, immediately endowing them with proper personal and estimations corresponding to their category.

I have been assiduously occupied in the preparation of the new Code of this branch, and it is not useless to consign here some observations, which are the notorious result of the deficiencies of all our laws. I have meditated a great deal on this perversion of the dominant criterion in our history, on this juri-

dically morbid inclination to mislead the legislation into inconsistent, inapplicable and almost purely metaphysical theories, that do not produce practical advantages to the life and improvement of the Nation, and scarcely place the sham-patriot's propagandists in aptitude to speak of our *very advanced and liberal legislation*, when the national mass vegetates in shadow and anxiety, lost its way of the courses of intellectual life and those likewise of the redeeming labor, theories that have the appearances of white water lilies, beautiful flowers which float embellishing the surface and charming the eyes, when below reigns silence and the mortal repose of the dark stagnant waters.

What do they learn in Venezuela? The young people, full of enthusiasm and love, run to the teaching institutes to provide themselves with the intellectual elements necessary to the struggle of life and to the robust and impulsive tendency, in all men of some elevation, of themselves shining and making their country shine, and those teaching Institutes offer to them, after long years of barren studies, a scholastic erudition of old things, anachronistic in the epoch, superior or perhaps inferior—to the level of ordinary life, wisdom of infolios abundant in abstract speculations, which modern intelligence devotes only to the great transcendental speculators, founders of systems and renovators of the intellectual middle, and naturally strange for its own condition of archaisms, to the newly arrived people, for whom it is sufficient to labor the ground cleared by the old, and crop the yield of their own particular efforts.

Mediæval viciousness that has subsisted in history, and checks still the development of many people, we ought to remove them to leave expeditious our route to the future; and for this reason I excite you, Citizen Legislators, to deliberate on such an arduous and transcendental matter, while I for my part commence to put the bases of the reform in the Code that I have dictated.

The plan and method of this Code are undubitably superior to those of the former. As the matters are distributed in separated laws, it is possible to introduce in it the improvements which the future may go on imposing, without making necessary a derogatory proceeding that our laws have so much discredited to us.

We have given cardinal amplitude to Primary Instruction, establishing it obligatory in the first degree, sanctioning thus

what a great and beautiful intelligence called the right of the child, which is mixed up with the right of the State, so that in a little time everybody in Venezuela will know how to read and write; and in the second degree, voluntary and gratuitous, in order that the citizens, with the facilities there established, may obtain the knowledge they will need for common activity and energy.

Only two universities will subsist, ruled by rectors and advisory boards, the Central in Caracas and the Western in Merida, which are sufficient for the necessities of the country. These institutes are organized in accordance with the last progress of science, and are the only teaching centres authorized to confer titles. The habilitation of studies and the etiquettes of the Universities have been conveniently regulated.

The Secondary Instruction, Pedagogic and of Philosophy and Letters, will be granted in Normal Schools and Colleges. The Normal Schools are four, for the formation of teachers; and in the Colleges we have divided the teaching in two courses, one of Secondary or preparatory instruction and the other of Philosophy and Letters. Of these Colleges there will be one at least for each sex in the Capitols of the States, and four in the Federal District. The women will not have classes of philosophy, but of matters more adequate to their instruction. There are established in each capital advisory boards to inspect the progress of the establishments of teachings.

Schools of commerce have been created and will be opened in the cities, where in the judgment of the Executive will be suitable, and those of primary and superior Agronomy, that is to say, practical agriculture and agronomic institutes, have been conveniently radicated.

The plan of apprenticeship in the Academy of Fine Arts has been much improved.

Liberty of teaching is consigned in this Code, distinguishing at the same time the rights and duties of the private training schools, and to the Government is reserved the inspection of scholar discipline, of hygiene (regulated here in a special law) and of the execution of the programmes of studies.

The Decrees and Resolutions that regulated the movement of

the rents of Instruction and the duties and attributions of Fiscals are also codified.

We need at any risk schools of practical industries; we need teaching of agriculture, of cultivations adapted to each zone of our territory; of apiculture, of pisciculture, sericulture, of commerce, of tanneries and dyeing, of extraction and manufacture of fibers which we so abundantly have, of woolen industries, of feculency, of veterinary, of zootechnics, of caseous industries for the fabrication of butter and cheese, of salting of meats, of fishery, minery, navigation, distillery, refinery, and many other branches of modern production, which change the face of nations, and raise them to riches, power and happiness. A workman, an artisan, an industrial of free intelligence, of strong and healthy arms, is much more useful to his country than a graduate of a university, faded in study, the magnitude of which escapes perhaps his own comprehension, sunk in misery, professional without clients, who knows of law formulas written in manuals, but who is always disposed to sacrifice them, in the cruelty of hunger, if not in the ignominy of vice.

We want thus, to save intellectualism of the dangers that threaten it, to redeem it from misery or from the objection that surrounds it everywhere in our midst, and for this purpose we must open to intelligence all the ways to unfold its activity, in order that the summits of human thought may be exhibited to the generations with the majesty they have, not aspiring to climb to them as the only solution of social destinies, but the vigorous spirits of powerful wings.

Think over this, Citizen Legislators, and you will think with me in the problem par excellence, which Venezuela offers to-day to the deliberation of its leaders.

For my part I have already subsidized the Agrarian Institute, a centre from which the Republic can expect benefits. I have ordered the restriction of the faculty of baccalaureate in colleges, to suspend the highest class in two universities and in a college of special category, and to found a **veterinary** school in the principal city of the southwest plains. Besides, seven hundred primary schools have been opened in the States and in the Federal District, providing them with good and adequate furniture.

In short, I can assure you that this branch of Government has had all my devotion, and that I will not leave our efforts to carry it through the course that laws and great public necessities may show to my patriotism.

LEGISLATORS.

I know well, for the attestation of my conscience, that the official word has revindicated under the Government of the Restoration its title of honorability, that never should abandon it and that never will abandon it while it depends upon me; I know well that the present state of things is not suspected of lying before public opinion—because we have never done it—or of deceiving—because we have never tried to do it; so that with perfect confidence and without worn-out declamations, I can present in rapid synthesis, in its more salient lines, a short picture of my administrative work of six months, obtaining so the honor to make you see, confirmed by facts, the promises I have made to my fellow-citizens in different solemn opportunities, promises that really were not but the expression of my infrangible purpose, the voice of hope, clean and unbound from all conventional interest, which my mind that of a sincere and believing patriot presented at the ideal altar of the Republic, when we were besieged by catastrophes, when conflicts came out with despairing, prolonged cruelty, without giving us time for any other thing, nor permitting us any action that might not be directed to conjure them.

The situation of the country was as difficult as unfortunate on the sad days of February, in which the blockade of our littoral was suspended.

The threatening international conflict kept up, and the civil war, nourished by the exasperation of hates and badly punished ambitions, devoured the Republic as a conflagration; the custom houses were closed, our economic resources and the desperate expedients of domestic appeals were consumed, and the Government was obliged to raise a loan of B. 341,266.56, in the capital, which was subscribed first by Cipriano Castro, to hold out the army, disposed to all kinds of sacrifices, in the rashness of patriotism, to keep up Venezuela independent and undivided, while there was blood in the veins of his sons.

The situation was then very grave.

With the suspension of the blockade we recovered the custom house revenue, but we could not expect much of its entrances in the anxiety of these circumstances; aside from this, by the protocols which we signed by that time in Washington we contracted peremptory obligations, in virtue of which we were obliged to pay immediately in gold, B. 1,723,765.65 to Germany, B. 169,382.70 to England, and to Italy B. 138,875, while the rest of the claims was submitted in pursuit of equity, to the contradictory judgment of the Mixed Commissions, that should soon be installed in this city. I have paid in gold until to-day, by reason of the foreign conflict, the amount of B. 6,658,952.07.

Besides these enormous and unforeseen expenses, I reimbursed on the month of July to the money-lenders the amount of the February loan, which was a cause of gratitude for us to the citizens who contributed to the service with good will; I re-established the payment of 50 per cent. of the public budget, and 25 per cent. of the allowance of the States, which I raised afterwards to 50 per cent., until the month of October, on which I re-established the complete payment of that constitutional obligation.

I employed in clothing and rations—money for the army and provisions for the park of reserve—B. 995,102.02.

I spent in the navy B. 2,088,470.75.

B. 1,543,000.76 have been inverted in public works.

I have spent B. 1,261,126.62 in repairs, conservation and increase of the telegraphic system.

Besides, two great debts that weighed heavily in the National Rent are almost cancelled; the credit of the Bank of Venezuela against the Government, which on the month of March amounted to more than eleven millions of bolivars, and is reduced to-day, by our payments, to one million, and the debt of salt mines, which up to that date reached nine millions, and now is reduced almost to two millions, for which reason the correspondent titles are quoted to-day in the Exchange with a premium of ten and twelve points without sellers.

While we faced simultaneously all those obligations, of so much gravity and magnitude, I have been withdrawing the 30 per cent. of the custom house entrances of La Guayra and

Puerto Cabello, in accordance with our obligations by the protocols of Washington ; and for this respect only I have deposited in the Bank of England, to the order of that obligation, the amount of five million bolivars in gold.

It is also opportune to tell you that the legal estimate of your expenses, as Representatives of the Venezuela people, is complete in cash.

Among the public works of importance and beauty, recently undertaken, are the Military Academy and the Academy of Fine Arts ; the custom houses of Tucacas and Macuro, in the port Cristobal Colon, and other buildings, high roads and aqueducts. These last enterprises of the greatest utility shall undoubtedly change the mercantile, political and social aspects of vast and rich regions of the country.

I do not wish to continue enumerating figures and works that you will find very well detailed in the fiscal report, but I wish to proclaim before you, Legislators, the unavoidable conclusion that from these eloquent data comes forth to public opinion, and to the impartial and foreseen national criterion. If in these six months, in these first hundred and eighty days of the period of convalescence that begins, we have realized the works of administration, that the Government leaves submitted, not to your equity, but to your justice, the degree of progress and welfare that the Republic might have conquered should be eminent, had we employed in this same regenerating labor the years and efforts we have spent in defending the country, in taking off harmless the institutions and the authority, from the blood and disorder that, like a cataclysm, like a flood, have passed over the territory and over the honor of Venezuela during times which seemed interminable.

I came to power with the clear vision of the future in my soul, with all the forecast of the struggle in my thought, and in my heart the necessary fortitude for deliberate efforts ; but the blind impulse was so strong that came to surprise me, although it never had violence enough to bend my spirit before what had the appearance of victorious and decisive imposition of fatality.

In thinking about the long time and many riches, lost in such a painful manner, to natural civilization by the work of anarchy,

we necessarily have to meditate on the irremissible guilt of the fellow-citizens that, with antipatriotic eagerness, have contributed to paralyze the work of the Restoration, that might have begun with all its efficiency and transcendancy since the armed hand of this great Cause fixed on the memorable 23d of October, 1899, upon the dome of the Capital, the flag unfolded to the winds of the Andes and the glories of the future on the heroic 23d of May.

And if in this order of ideas, such a consideration is extremely lamentable, what shall we say if we carry back our thoughts across the century in which we have lived squandering it and outraging our history, until the glorious genial days which the great spirit of Bolivar and the strong arm of his fellow-soldiers insured with epic prodigies the independence of Venezuela.

Meditate attentively about this; think on the time, on the sun of life, of will and of riches, that have been lost, and tell the Republic if the Restoration and its men have not fulfilled their duty when we raised ourselves face to face with the disastrous wave and established with insuperable decision the energetic formula that is to rectify the destinies of the country.

SENATORS AND DEPUTIES.

Let us consecrate in this favorable and solemn opportunity a word of gratitude and of admiration to those abnegated warriors, legionary of the Liberal Restoration, those gallant companions, superior to all weakness, to all hesitation, who with spirited earnestness, with almost homeric effort, since there was no danger that could frighten them, and since in that long period of fight and painful campaigns, they had no choice but death or victory,—co-operated with me in the creation, defense and consolidation of the work of saving the Republic. They always carried the arms of honor, and wielded them for honor, to realize the dream that never disappeared from their generous souls, of founding the institutions and directing the country towards the greatness imperfectly seen by our glorious Liberators.

And everlasting praise for those who perished! For those who fell in the obstreperous affray, promoted by madness and in-

iquity, a laurel on the stone of their tomb! Their blood, the sacrifice of their lives, is the propitiatory holocaust of the Restoration in the august altar of the country; and, I, in the emotion of my profound gratitude, and in presence of the realized work of peace and progress, invoke at this moment their memory, and consecrate to it this message, that I present to you in the name of the Liberal Restoration Party, and in the performance of my constitutional duty.

LEGISLATORS.

I pray that the God of Nations may inspire your deliberations, in order that the wisdom and patriotism of your resolutions contribute to the conservation of this great work, complementary of the Independence, reaffirming the national sovereignty under the protection of the union and fraternity of all the Venezuelans, a noble purpose for which I have made, I make, and I will always make the most fervent vows.

CIPRIANO CASTRO.

CARACAS, February 20th, 1904.

